

Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Vol. 90 No. 5

Published: 20th October, 1970

The six hundred and sixty-sixth meeting of the Club was held at the Criterion in Piccadilly, London, W.1 on Tuesday, 15th September, 1970, at 7 p.m.

Chairman: Dr. J. F. Monk; present: 19 members and 10 guests.

Mr. John Hopcroft showed the Club a selection of his photographic slides of birds at Lake Nakuru and neighbouring lakes in Kenya, and spoke briefly about the creation of a reserve on the shores of Lake Nakuru devoted principally to the conservation of water birds.

Professor Emil K. Urban then spoke to the Club about the bird colonies breeding on islands in Lake Shala, Ethiopia, describing each colony and illustrating his address with coloured slides.

The Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa* in the Central African Republic

by *F. Roux and C. W. Benson*

Received 2nd April, 1970

Keith *et al.* (1970) give no record of *Sarothrura rufa* (Vieillot) from the Central African Republic. The Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, has received two females of this species, both apparently fully adult, from Bangui, at 4° 23' N., 18° 35' E. The first was collected by Monsieur R. Pujol on 10th November, 1968; the second by Mlle. Ch. Choux on 28th August, 1969. Their respective measurements (in millimetres) are:

Wing	74	75
Culmen (from base of skull)	12	13
Tarsus	21	22.5
Middle toe with claw	29	29.5

Keith *et al.* regard the subspecies in Gabon, Cameroun and Nigeria as *S. r. bonapartii* (Bonaparte), the wing-length of which they give as 66–73, as against 74–82 mm. in specimens of nominate *rufa* from South Africa (measurements do not indicate any sexual difference at all). They recognise *S. r. elisabethae* van Someren as the subspecies in the north-eastern Congo, Uganda and extreme western Kenya, but only on the average difference that in females the mantle is usually transversely barred with white, whereas in nominate *rufa*, ranging from central Kenya, the southern Congo and Angola southward, it is usually spotted with white, and in *bonapartii* usually streaked so. Actually the two Bangui females have the mantle spotted, agreeing well in this respect with seven females from Malawi, and three females from South Africa, in the British Museum (Natural History). Nevertheless on geographical grounds they must be placed with *elisabethae*. Their relatively long wing-measurements (74, 75 mm.) indicate that they are better placed with that subspecies than with *bonapartii*. Keith *et al.* give the wing-lengths of over 200 specimens of *elisabethae* from the north-eastern Congo (mostly from Butembo, 0° 08' N., 29° 17' E.) as 70–81 (average ca. 76) mm.

Reference:

Keith, G. S., Benson, C. W. and Irwin M. P. Stuart. 1970. The genus *Sarothrura* (class Aves, family Rallidae). *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 143(1).